



## FLORENCE GRISWOLD MUSEUM

Home of American Impressionism

96 LYME STREET  
OLD LYME, CONNECTICUT 06371  
TEL 860. 434. 5542 FAX 434. 9778  
WWW.FLORENCEGRISWOLDMUSEUM.ORG

Testimony of Jeffrey Andersen, Director, Florence Griswold Museum  
February 17, 2017  
Appropriations Committee  
Connecticut General Assembly

Senator Cathy Osten, Senator Paul Formica, Representative Toni Walker, and members of the committee, my name is Jeff Andersen and I serve as the Director of the Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme. I am here to speak about two statewide partnerships – Connecticut Humanities and the Connecticut Art Museum Consortium – that need your support to continue their essential work on behalf of the state's citizenry and visitors.

The Arts and Humanities contribute a deep sense of purpose to our lives, as we seek to understand the world at large. Research has shown the importance of exposing young people to the arts, to history, to literature, and to a broad-based curriculum that engages the senses, awakens the imagination, and develops critical thinking skills. Connecticut is blessed with an array of cultural organizations – libraries, museums, historical societies, and historic sites – that do just that. They serve our citizens as centers of community and as beacons of opportunity. But that diverse tapestry is seriously threatened by a lack of funding.

I respectfully ask you to please restore the \$1.73 million appropriation for Connecticut Humanities that was included in the 2016 state budget approved by the legislature, but later removed by line-item veto after the budget was passed. As a result Connecticut Humanities was not able to distribute highly competitive program grants this past year to hundreds of organizations across the state, at a great loss to the fabric of our communities. Thanks to the consistent support of this legislative body for over twenty years now, Connecticut Humanities is widely recognized for the rigor and integrity of its competitive grant-making process, for its commitment to excellence, and for its results-based accountability.

I have seen firsthand the impact of this organization. Over the past thirty years, CT Humanities has helped to transform the Florence Griswold Museum from a small community-based organization into one of the state's cultural anchors that serves nearly 80,000 residents and visitors each year. Importantly, we have used their

support to leverage private support from individuals, foundations and corporations. They have helped to build our Museum's capacity so we are now a more vital force in our region and contribute strongly to our economy by bringing thousands of visitors to our state, who in turn support our tourism-based businesses.

Turning to the Connecticut Art Museum Consortium, in 2013 seven of the state's leading independent art museums formed a statewide partnership to leverage our collective economic impact. Located throughout the state in New Britain, New London, Waterbury, Farmington, Ridgefield, Greenwich, and Old Lyme, our seven museums serve over 400,000 people with incredible exhibitions of art treasures, educational service to schools, and as leading tourism destinations for experiencing Connecticut's art and history.

In 2014, the state legislature funded the Art Museum Consortium with a line item appropriation of \$525,000 so we could work closely together to develop new exhibitions and public programs, accompanied by targeted marketing plans. It was a success right from the beginning, bringing visitors to the state, and having a significant multiplying economic impact of over \$3 million initially. In the ensuing two years we have weathered budget rescissions and, now, unfortunately, this appropriation is zeroed out in the Governor's budget. I ask that you at least maintain these Directed Funds, or even better, restore them to the previous very modest level of \$525,000. With your support, my colleagues and I pledge to you that we will do everything we can to bring a strong return to the state's creative economy.

Thank you for the trust you have put in Connecticut Humanities and the Art Museum Consortium to affect positive change in our state. I hope we can count on your continued support.